

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES

February 18, 2021 4:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers

PRESENT: COMMISSION CHAIR Derrick Thaxton
VICE CHAIR Nikki Garry
COMMISSIONERS Byron Hansbro, Joyce Keller, Francie Johnson, Marty Watkins and Richard Zaker

ABSENT: NONE

ALSO, PRESENT: ACTING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Penny Rogers
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Sherry Beasley

I. Call to Order

Chair Thaxton called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Seven out of seven Commissioners were present at the time of roll call. Chair Thaxton declared a quorum does exist to conduct and approve business.

II. Concerns, Comments or Questions from the Audience

There were none. Chair Thaxton reminded the Commissioners if they are approached by a citizen about a situation to direct them to Human Resources and do not address their issue or promise them anything.

III. Approval of the January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Zaker directed a question to Chair Thaxton regarding Protecting Places of Worship. Commissioner Zaker wanted to know if there is going to be a follow-up forum after Covid is over or have we gone as far as we can with this topic. Ms. Rogers stated she didn't put the Protecting Places of Worship on the agenda this month because we cannot do anything during Covid. Chair Thaxton stated he will address this subject in Other Business.

Motion was made by Commissioner Johnson to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Keller. Upon roll call, Commissioners Byron Hansbro, Joyce Keller, Francie Johnson, Vice Chair Nikki Garry and Chair Derrick Thaxton, voted aye. Commissioners Watkins and Zaker abstained because they did not attend this meeting. Commission Chair Thaxton declared the motion carried.

IV. Monthly Activity Report & Summary of Cases

Acting Human Resources Manager Rogers provided a monthly status report of cases. (Exhibit A) Chair Thaxton asked if the City could be reimbursed for any of its expenses in the settlement of Case #190725. Ms. Rogers replied that she would check with Mr. Spannaus.

V. Unfinished Business

A. MLK 2021

1. Update on participation in Juneteenth

Chair Thaxton reported he is still working with the African-American Genealogical Society whose next meeting is in March. Chair Thaxton would like to table this item until the next Human Relations Commission meeting.

2. Update on MLK essay, poetry & drawing contest.

Ms. Beasley reported there were 55 to 60 entries for the essay and poetry contest. The Commission decided not to have the drawing contest this year due to this being a virtual event. Commissioner Johnson and Vice Chair Garry will be the judges for the essay and poetry contest and will give their selections for the winners to Sherry on Monday, February 22. The winners will read their essay or poem at the Black History Month virtual town hall event on February 25.

B. Virtual town hall with speaker for Black History Month

Chair Thaxton reported that Commissioner Hansbro who is also the pastor of Greater Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church will be the keynote speaker. Commissioner Hansbro said his niece will sing the Black National Anthem and her mother will be there for backup. Chair Thaxton stated he will need to find someone for the opening prayer. Jonathan Fluker will sing the National Anthem. Commissioner Zaker wanted to know if there were plans on promoting this event with advertisements or public service announcements. Ms. Rogers stated she would send the information to the media and to Richland Community College.

C. Acts of Kindness campaign

Commissioner Zaker stated that the acts of kindness idea was birthed by him and Commissioner Keller. The idea came about when he was soliciting information about the article for the Herald & Review for Martin Luther King Day. Vice Chair Garry was also involved with this idea. Commissioner Zaker thought if the Commission in some small way could encourage people to come forward with examples of acts of kindness they have performed or acts of kindness someone has done for them, we could promote this on the Commission's Facebook page. Commissioner Johnson stated that groups could be included in this as well as individuals. Commissioner Keller suggested this could be an annual project for the month of February in conjunction with Black History Month. Commissioner Zaker suggested A.O.K could be the title for the project. Vice Chair Garry suggested an ad hoc committee be formed for this campaign. Discussion followed. Chair Thaxton will meet with Commissioner Zaker to discuss this in further detail.

VI. New Business

None.

VII. Other Business

Chair Thaxton stated he talked to Mr. Bergeron who said he is no longer in his position. Mr. Bergeron referred Chair Thaxton to someone at the Indiana branch. Mr. Bergeron encouraged us to continue to watch for suspicious behavior especially now that individuals

are wearing masks. Mr. Bergeron's replacement will contact Chair Thaxton after he gets settled in his new position.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, Vice Chair Garry made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Johnson.

Upon roll call, the meeting was adjourned at 4:39 p.m.